

REMARKS

Claims 1-21, 23-30 and 31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 17 is amended. No new matter is added by this amendment, as the subject matter of allowable claim 22 is incorporated into claim 17. Claim 22 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim. Reconsideration of the application based upon the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

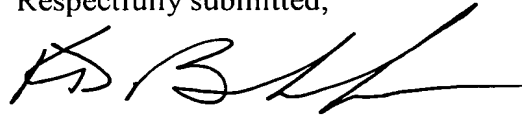
The Office Action, in paragraph 4, states that claims 1-16 and 28-29 are allowed, and that claim 22 recites allowable subject matter. Claim 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants appreciate this indication of allowability, and base the amendment of claim 17 on this indication. Specifically, the subject matter of allowable claim 22 is incorporated into independent claim 17 rendering claim 17 and the claims depending therefrom allowable.

The Office Action, in paragraph 3, rejects claims 17-21, 23-27 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,537,188 to Haneda in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,414,493 to Fujii et al. (hereinafter "Fujii"). The amendment incorporating the allowable subject matter of claim 22 into independent claim 17 renders this rejection moot.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 17-21, 23-27 and 31, in addition to the allowance of claims 1-16 and 28-29, are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Request for Continued Examination
Information Disclosure Statement

Date: January 17, 2007

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